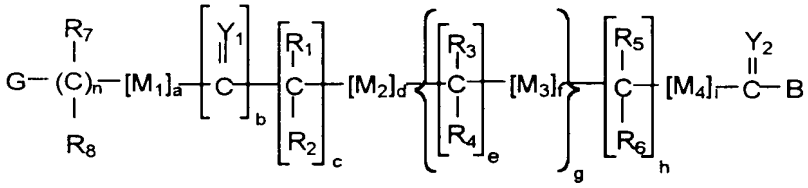
WE CLAIM:

1. A compound comprising the formula:



(I)

wherein:

G is a linear or branched polymer residue;

Y_1 and Y_2 are independently O, S, or NR_9;

M_1-M_3 are independently O, S, or NR_{10};

M_4 is X or Q;

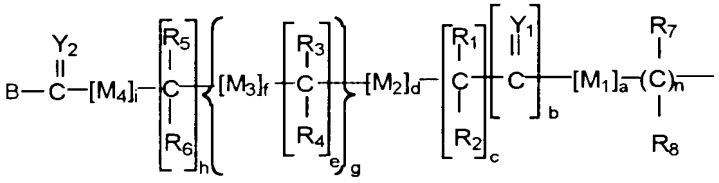
wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C(=Y_2)$;

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

R_{1-10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

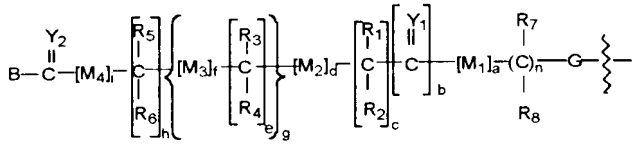
a, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, *i* and *n* are each independently zero or a positive integer.

2. The compound of claim 1, wherein G includes a capping group A, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, CO_2H, C_{1-6} alkyl moieties, and

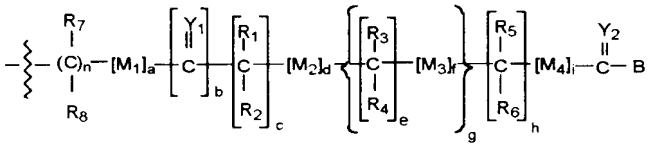


(II')

3. A compound of claim 2, of the formula:



(II)



4. The compound of claim 1, wherein *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, *i* and *n* are independently zero, one or two.

5. The compound of claim 1, wherein Y_1 and Y_2 are both O.

6. The compound of claim 1, wherein M_2 is NH and *d* is one.

7. The compound of claim 1, wherein R_7 and R_8 are both H.

8. The compound of claim 1, wherein *n* is 1.

9. The compound of claim 1, wherein *a* is 0.

10. The compound of claim 1, wherein *a* is 1.

11. The compound of claim 1, wherein *c* is 0.

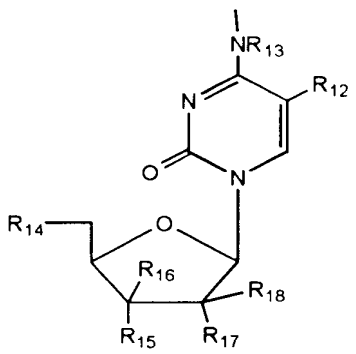
12. The compound of claim 1, wherein *g* is 2, M_3 is O, *e* is 2, *f* is 1 and R_3 and R_4 are H.

13. The compound of claim 12, wherein *b*, *d*, *h* and *n* are 1, R_5 and R_6 are H and M_2 is NH.

14. The compound of claim 12, wherein *b*, *d* and *n* are 1, M_2 is NH and R_3 and R_4 are H.

15. The compound of claim 1, wherein B is a residue of an amine - containing moiety.

16. The compound of claim 15, wherein said amine-containing moiety is



wherein

R_{12-13} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, halo, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls, substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

R_{14-18} are independently selected from alkoxy, e.g. OR_{19} or, in the alternative, H, OH, N_3, NHR_{20}, NO_2 or CN, fluoro, chloro, bromo, iodo, where R_{19-20} are independently selected from the same group which defines R_{12-13}.

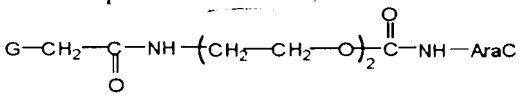
17. The compound of claim 1, wherein G is $O\text{-}(CH_2CH_2O)_x$ or $O\text{-}(CH(CH_3)CH_2O)_x$, wherein x is the degree of polymerization.

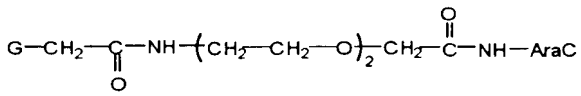
18. The compound of claim 17, wherein G is $O\text{-}(CH_2CH_2O)_x$ and x is a positive integer selected so that the weight average molecular weight is at least about 20,000.

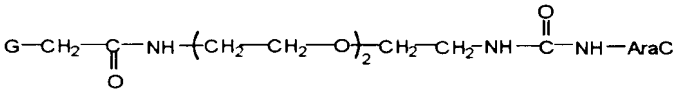
19. The compound of claim 18, wherein G has a weight average molecular weight of from about 20,000 to about 100,000.

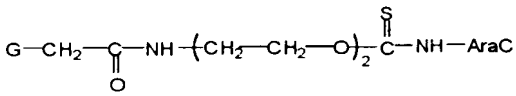
20. The compound of claim 21, wherein G has a weight average molecular weight of from about 25,000 to about 60,000.

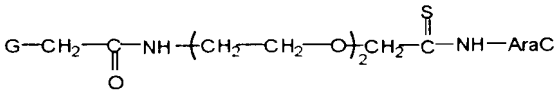
21. A compound of claim 1, selected from the group consisting of:











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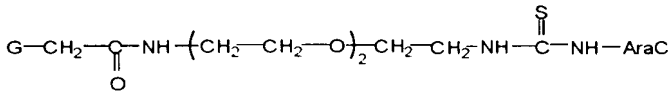
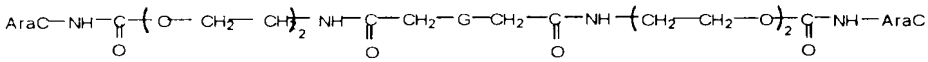
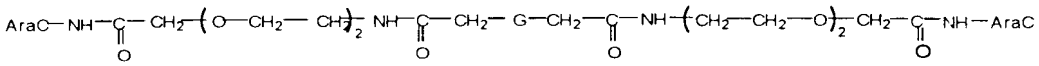
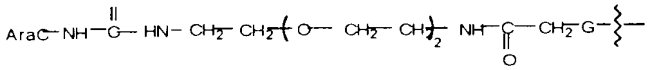
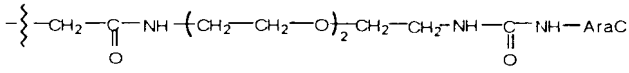


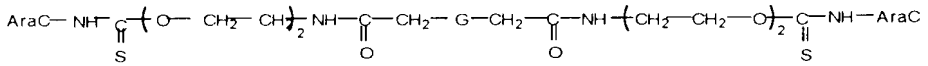
22. A compound of claim 3, selected from the group consisting of:

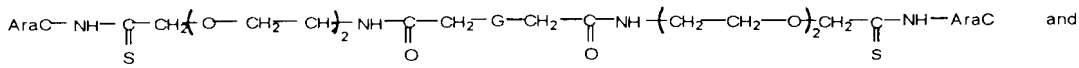












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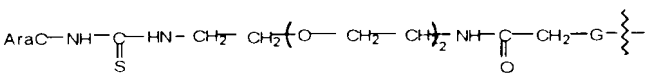
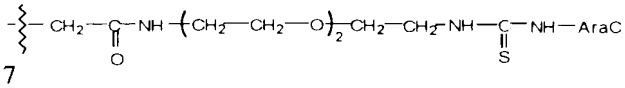
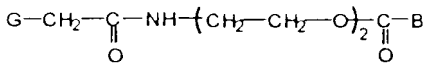
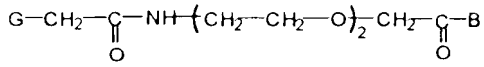
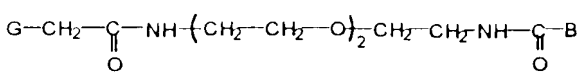


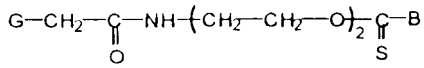


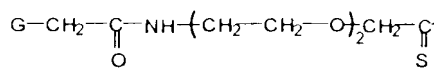
23. A compound of claim 1, selected from the group consisting of:











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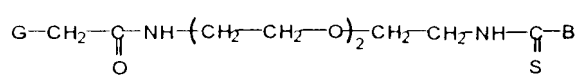
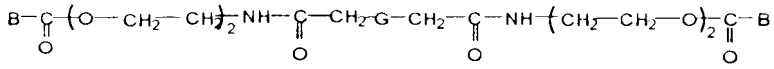
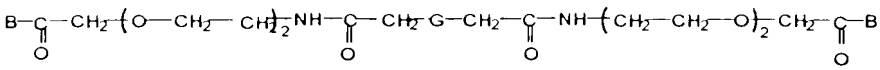
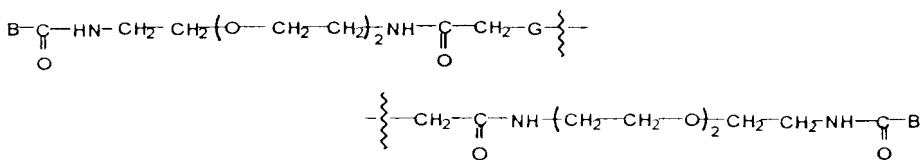
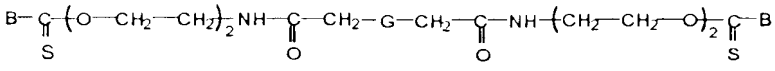


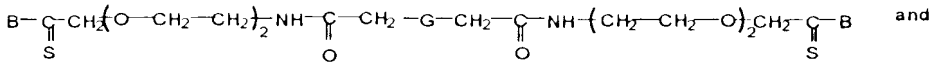
24. A compound of claim 3, selected from the group consisting of:











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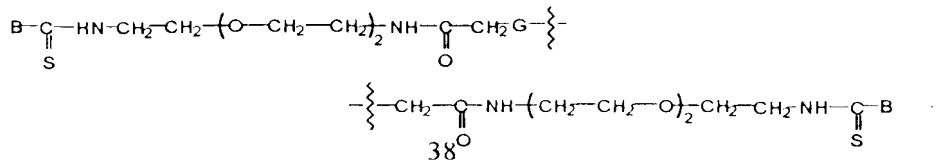
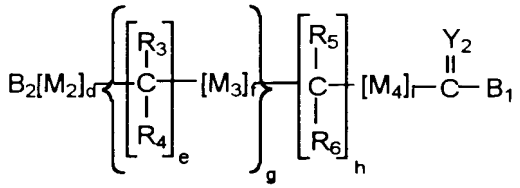


25. A method of preparing a polymeric conjugate, comprising:

a) reacting a biologically active moiety having an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group with a compound of the formula



(III)

wherein

B_1 is a leaving group capable of reacting with an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group;

B_2 is a cleavable protecting group;

Y_2 is O, S, or NR_9;

M_2-M_3 are independently O, S, or NR_{10};

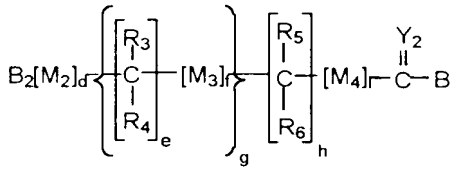
M_4 is X or Q;

wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C(=Y_2)$;

R_{3-6}, R_9 and R_{10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

d, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, and *i* are each independently zero or a positive integer;

to form a protected intermediate of the formula:



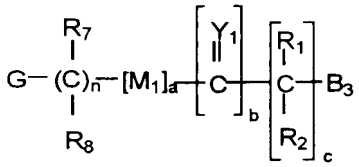
(IV)

wherein

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

b) deprotecting the resultant intermediate by removing B_2; and

c) reacting the deprotected intermediate with a compound of the formula



(V)

wherein

B_3 is a leaving group;

G is a polymer residue;

Y_1 is O, S, or NR_9;

M_1 is O, S, or NR_{10};

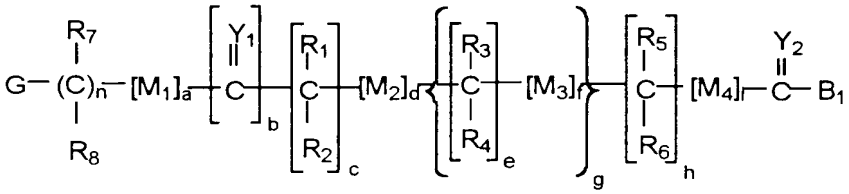
R_1, R_2, R_7, R_9 and R_{10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

a, *b* and *c* are each independently zero or a positive integer,

whereby a polymeric conjugate is formed.

26. A method of preparing a polymeric conjugate, comprising:

a) reacting a polymer-spacer intermediate of the formula



(V)

wherein

B_1 is a leaving group capable of reacting with an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group;

G is a polymer residue;

Y_1 and Y_2 are independently O, S, or NR_9;

M_1-M_3 are independently O, S, or NR_{10};

M_4 is X or Q;

wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C(=Y_2)$;

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

$R_{1\text{-}10}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}12}$ branched alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}8}$ cycloalkyls, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ substituted alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}8}$ substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ heteroalkyls and substituted $C_{1\text{-}6}$ heteroalkyls;

a, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, *i* and *n* are each independently zero or a positive integer and thereafter reacting intermediate with a biologically active moiety having an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group to form the polymeric conjugate.

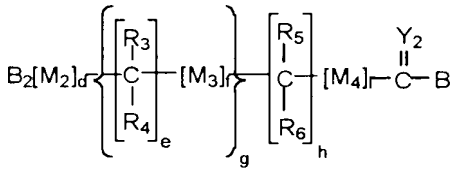
27. A method of treatment, comprising:

administering to a mammal in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound of claim 1, wherein B is a residue of a biologically active moiety.

28. A method of treatment, comprising:

administering to a mammal in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound of claim 3, wherein B is a residue of a biologically active moiety.

29. A compound of the formula:



(IV)

wherein

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

B_2 is a cleavable protecting group;

Y_2 is O, S, or NR_9;

M_2-M_4 are independently O, S, or NR_{10}.

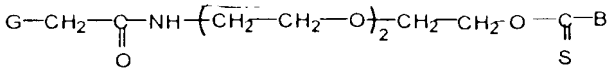
M_4 is X or Q;

wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C(=Y_2)$;

$R_{3\text{-}6,\ 9\ \text{and}\ 10}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}12}$ branched alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}8}$ cycloalkyls, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ substituted alkyls, $C_{3\text{-}8}$ substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, $C_{1\text{-}6}$ heteroalkyls and substituted $C_{1\text{-}6}$ heteroalkyls;

d, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, and *i* are each independently zero or a positive integer.

30. A compound of claim 1, selected from the group consisting of:



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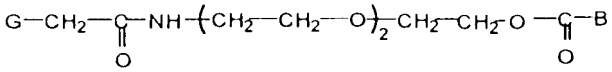
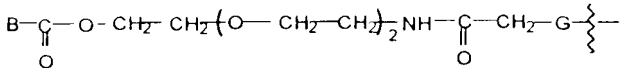
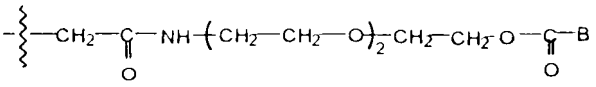


31. A compound of claim 3, selected from the group consisting of:





and